

MANCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

7:00 p.m.

Lincoln Center

PRESENT: Crockett, Cruz, Leon, Luxenberg, Pattacini, Scappaticci

ALSO PRESENT: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kisiel, Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Management Brooks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Richardson, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services Matfess

ABSENT: Hagenow, Walton

A. OPENING

A.1&2 MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Chairperson Pattacini.

Mr. Pattacini informed the audience that Merrill Kidd has resigned her position as a Board member, effective immediately, due to personal family matters. Mr. Pattacini then explained that pursuant to Board policy, Section 12, the method for filling a vacancy mid-term is for the minority party to appoint a new member, which would then be ratified by the Board. Mr. Crockett will be working with his party to recommend a candidate, hopefully by the next meeting. Mr. Pattacini thanked Ms. Kidd for her service and wished her well.

A.3 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

ADOPTED – Minutes Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of October 22, 2012.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART I

B.1. Washington School Improvement Plan

Dr. Kisiel informed the Board that he had completed his meetings with all of the principals regarding their school improvement plans, which are to align with the District goals. This evening he introduced Karen Gray, Principal of Washington Elementary School, to highlight the Washington School Improvement Plan.

Mrs. Gray showed a Power Point, which is available for viewing on the website. She outlined the rigorous, high-level vocabulary that is introduced to students, as well as the Safe-Smart-Respectful mantra that is said and practiced each day at Washington. Mrs. Gray reviewed the climate survey results from last Spring. She noted that not many families had taken the time to complete the survey, but those that had were positive in their feelings about the school. This year, in an effort to reach more parents, the plan is to set up computers during parent-teacher conferences so that more families will take the time to complete the survey.

Mrs. Gray outlined the Washington School Improvement Plan, which restates the District Goals outlined by Dr. Kisiel previously. Some of the initiatives that she plans for this year include uninterrupted instructional time during literacy and numeracy, differentiated professional development based on teacher and grade level needs around the Common Core, and recognizing Washington's diverse community through VIP day. The full plan can be found on our website.

Mr. Scappaticci noted that Washington is one of his favorite buildings in the district and it was noted that this year Washington turns 100 years old! He expressed he would like to see data in graph form, for easier understanding. Mr. Scappaticci wondered if there were specific goals for improving the CMT scores. Mrs. Gray stated that they look at each student and their individual needs and different interventions that can be utilized to help raise scores. Mr. Scappaticci also likes that Washington reinforces positive behavior and wondered how long that has been in effect. Mrs. Gray noted that PBIS has been in effect for several years and each year the model is tweaked a bit, now focused more on a classroom goal.

Mr. Leon wondered how the integration of the Nathan Hale students to Washington has gone this year? Mrs. Gray was very pleased with the transition and stated that Washington feels like a new school, with new families this year. She pointed out that one of the former Nathan Hale mothers is now one of our PTA officers, along with two dads and one grandma. She stated the PTA numbers this year were very high, with about

30 people attending the first meeting with the new Board this week. The meeting was engaging and exciting!

Mr. Leon asked Mrs. Gray to work with Dr. Pease to come up with accurate budget numbers for any equipment that is needed at Washington as it is a district goal to provide equity throughout the district.

Mr. Leon inquired how much the principals collaborate with each other? Mrs. Gray outlined that there are monthly meetings with Dr. Kisiel and the principals, as well as a monthly elementary principal meeting. She also notes that the principals do communicate via phone contact quite frequently.

B.2. Alliance Grant Update

Dr. Kisiel stated the teacher and administrator evaluation plans are being revised. The teacher evaluation plans are due to the State Board of Education no later than April 15th. He outlined that 45% of the teacher evaluation will be based on student performance and 40% dependant on the observation of the evaluator. Dr. Kisiel stated the rubric for evaluations is being created currently. While we could simply adopt the state plan, which is available to us, it would seem like it was just another thing being "done to" teachers, but Dr. Kisiel would like to create a commitment to the process rather than simply compliance. Engaging the teachers from the start on what the rubric should look like and what they will be held accountable for is very important. *ReVision* is a company that was recently hired, through the Alliance Grant, to act as a facilitator for Manchester, as well as several area districts, to help achieve a rubric and engage teachers in this process. As for the administrator evaluations, we have asked for assistance from the State Department of Education to guide our work. Dr. Kisiel stated the teacher evaluations will take 12 full days to compile and the administrator evaluations will require 8 full days, all of which has to be accomplished by April 15, 2013.

Dr. Kisiel announced that Ms. Cavanaugh, the former Director of Curriculum of Enfield Public Schools has been hired to help plan the K-6 summer program. Ms. Cavanaugh will also work closely with two teachers (stipend positions not yet filled) who will assist in this planning.

Mr. Pattacini inquired about the process, when the draft would be available, and when Dr. Kisiel would be looking for the Board to adopt those plans. Dr. Kisiel estimated that he would be seeking Board approval and adoption of both policies probably in early March so that there would be time for review and revisions, if required, before the plans are due to the Department of Education by mid-April. The evaluations would then be implemented, by statute, in the 2013-2014 school year, after a training workshop is provided for administration and teachers to be sure everyone understands the new guidelines.

C. CONSENT CALENDAR

Dr. Kisiel presented seven items on the Consent Calendar for Board approval.

C.1. Personnel Action

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

C.2. Establish an appropriation for \$5,856 under the FY 2012-2013 Bilingual Education grant, to be funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education

C.3. Establish an appropriation in the amount of \$25,661 to be funded by the Manchester Education Association (MEA) to grant MEA President, Tom Nicholas, 0.50 release time for the 2012-13 school year

C.4. Establish an appropriation for FY 2012-13 for grant received in the amount of \$133,773 for Out-of-Town Magnet School Transportation from the State Department of Education in support of the District's magnet school activities

C.5. Transfer of Funds

Details had already been provided to the Board members in their agenda folders.

- Transfer from SPED Consultants to SPED Travel & Lodging account, \$10,000.
- Transfer from Manchester High School Guidance Professional Development to Manchester High School Guidance General Supplies/Materials account, \$300.
- Transfer from Illing Middle School Administrators In-Service (\$2,000) and Administrators Dues/Fees (\$1,000) to Illing Middle School Administrators General Supplies/Materials account, \$3,000.

C.6. Permission to apply for Title III, Part A, Subpart 1 – English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement Grant in the amount of \$50,990

C.7. Permission to apply for Nellie Mae Education Foundation, District Level Systems Change – Urban District Grant for FY February 2013 – September 2014 in the amount of \$449,650

The Chairman called for a motion.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the recommendation to adopt the Consent Calendar, as outlined in Item C of the agenda.

DISCUSSION:

Mr. Leon asked for clarity on Item 3, regarding the MEA President release time. It was explained by Mrs. Brooks that half of Mr. Nicholas' salary is funded by the MEA for the time he takes to act as President, which is then used to pay for his replacement in class.

Mr. Pattacini asked for clarity on Item 4, regarding transportation with the Board picking up the balance of the cost. Mrs. Brooks explained that we are currently transporting 72 students to out-of-town magnet schools and the anticipated total expenditure is \$133,773. This grant, from the State Department of Education, will reimburse up to that cost, and we receive half in December and the other half in June, based on the actual expenditure.

The Chairperson called the question.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, mentioned that he has two students attending Washington Elementary, one of which is in 5th grade. He noticed a shift in climate at the school between the old principal and Mrs. Gray, and that under her leadership, the school feels more like a family with a warm environment. Mr. Aiken is impressed with Mrs. Gray's interaction with the students and he feels she treats the students as we treat our own children.

Mr. Aiken stated it seems like 1/3 of the school improvement plan addressed personal responsibility and ethical behavior. He wonders why the school has to be responsible for this? He asks the Board to ask the parents to be responsible for their students, though he realizes that this is hard to do as elected officials. He feels consistency between school and home is needed.

Last, Mr. Aiken feels a 7 year plan for computer replacement in schools is far too long. At his office, computers are replaced every 3 years as they get outdated quickly.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, stated there have been many articles in the news recently, one being in the *New Haven Register* on 11/10, that talk about the health risks of energy drinks.

Mr. Stringfellow was sorry to hear about the break-in and computer theft at Bowers Elementary.

Mr. Stringfellow suggested an article on updating digital information in the September issue of *Education Digest*. He pointed out Veteran's Day was this past Sunday and *National Geographic* is doing a documentary on the Vietnam War on December 28th. Mr. Stringfellow noted that his father was a WWII veteran.

Mr. Stringfellow talked about Native American Awareness month and a new movie coming out about Abraham Lincoln that he thought was worth seeing.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – PART II

None.

F. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

G. NEW BUSINESS

G.1. Manchester Education Association (MEA) Teachers Contract

Mrs. Brooks reviewed that on October 18th the Manchester Board of Education and the Manchester Education Association had reached an agreement on a contract covering July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016. The full contract can be found on the website, but some highlights include:

- Two night conferences in the fall and two night conferences in the spring at the high school.
- High School and Middle School will now have collaborative planning periods.
- 1% increase in cost share each year for insurance, bringing them from 18/15/12% to 21/18/15% cost share by the end of the contract.
- Modification to retiree's insurance to take effect in July 2013, with the cost share for the retiree rising to 2x the premium contribution percentage paid by active employees, and the retiree will have to pay 100% for any dependants. This is for teachers hired prior to 1998.
- Since this is quite a change in the contract, teachers hired prior to 1998 have been given until March 1, 2013, to declare their intention to retire on June 30, 2013. If under 55 years old, sick day buy back cannot be put back into the 401A program, which is mandatory for those over 55.
- Salary steps are included each year, and those on the maximum step will receive a 0.5% increase in year 1, 1% in years 2 and 3 (8.36% in 3 years).

Mrs. Brooks noted that the union ratified the contract November 1st and now the Board needs to ratify it. Then, provided the Board of Directors does not reject it, the contract will be approved in 30 days.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt G.1. Manchester Education Association Teachers Contract from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

G.2. Manchester Employees Custodial Contract AFL-CIO Local #991 of Council #4

Mrs. Brooks explained that this was an extension of the contract from June 30, 2012 to June 30, 2013. There will be a 0.75% increase in salaries, which is the only change. That equals a cost of approximately \$31,000. Mrs. Brooks noted a new 3 year contract will be negotiated next Spring.

Secretary Leon moved for the Board of Education to adopt the extension of the Manchester Employees Custodial Contract Local #991 of Council #4 Contract from June 30, 2012 through June 30, 2013. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion.

6/0 – Voted in favor.

H. COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Crockett stated that last night at Bowers a cameraman from WFSB asked what he could do to help replenish the stolen computers. Mr. Crockett felt that was a nice gesture and he appreciates that and thanks him.

Dr. Kisiel stated that question has come up several times recently and monetary contributions will be accepted – as long as the money is specified for the replacement of the computers at the school. However, Dr. Kisiel states we are unable to accept used equipment due to compatibility problems. Dr. Kisiel had just received notice that Key Hyundai had contributed \$2,000 earlier in the day and he thanked them.

Mr. Pattacini thanks anyone that has or plans to donate for their generosity.

Mr. Pattacini received a letter from Mr. Kelly representing the Students of Color organization. He is concerned that the Board has not hired a permanent Superintendent yet and he encourages the Board to continue their search. Mr. Pattacini notes that is on the top of their agenda.

I. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None.

J. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Limited to items on tonight's agenda)

Scott Aiken, 92 Laurel Street, stated that regarding technology, the Board's support is critical. He is incredibly impressed what Washington teachers can accomplish in the 100 year old school facilities they have to work in, and he has never heard a single complaint from anyone there – they just work around it and ignore it to focus on the kids.

Mr. Aiken points out that the high school recently upgraded their website and all schools should be following suit. He would like an interactive portal for parents. He would also like site for the PTA to post their information. He wants to get more parents involved and is happy to report that this year Washington has 50 paid members in the PTA so far.

Mr. Aiken spoke about enrichment opportunities and the wide range needed at the elementary level.

Mr. Aiken stated there are computers in the school that are so old they shouldn't be used. He visited Two Rivers Magnet School, where there is a 1 laptop per student ratio. He spoke to the principal there and asked what was the difference between a CREC school and any other school system. He was told that the principals in CREC schools are empowered to do what they need for their school with their budget because education is an emergency.

Mr. Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, gives his support to the items on the Consent Calendar. Mr. Stringfellow thought Mrs. Gray gave a great presentation tonight. As for parental involvement, he feels all families are different and they do the best they can. Some families may need assistance with parental training.

Mr. Stringfellow supports the Alliance Grant update. He suggested an article in *Family Circle* magazine on internet safety and monitoring Facebook. He also noted some recent TV shows had internet safety as a topic.

Mr. Pattacini noted that members of the public do have an opportunity to email Board members or submit items in writing, as three minutes often isn't enough time to convey all of their thoughts.

K. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Leon read a note from Ms. Walton, asking about a Culturally Responsive Education Statement from the State as a future item.

L. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pattacini called for a motion to adjourn.

Secretary Leon moved and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting.

6/0 - Voted in favor.

Adjournment 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal Leon
Board Secretary